

Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus #4

January 31, 1986

An irregular publication of the US Orphan Service

Your Orphan Games Honcho is Jim Burgess, 100 Holden Street, Providence, RI 02908-5731, (401) 351-0287.

The USOS is committed to supporting the smooth operation to completion of PBM Diplomacy games and variants registered with the Boardman and Miller Number Custodians. This little game sheet is published with the intent of facilitating the transference of games that have been turned over to the US Orphan Service to be rehoused.

I have a couple of announcements first off. If any of you would like to receive all issues of YVSC (now the official abbreviation) that I publish, the cost will be \$0.25/issue. All players, GM's, and custodians who have an interest in particular issues will continue to receive those issues free. I am willing to work out trades or other agreements on request, but the publication schedule of the szine will not be consistent. I didn't publish anything for the first nine months I had the custodianship and now I've published four issues in less than three months. I also publish a "quasi-szine" called *The Boob Report* that I will throw in for free on any trade deals. I run one game there and feature music reviews in an attempt to pick up the slack from Keith Sherwood's impending fold of *The Inner Light*. I'll never reproduce his California cool though.

Another issue I want to bring up is the search for Keith's successor as Co-Director in the USOS. There are two highly qualified candidates at the moment and I expect Keith will make a decision soon, so if anyone else is interested they should get in touch with Keith immediately. There was some sentiment expressed that only one custodian might be needed right now, but I disagree. This job is very streaky. Summertime and the holiday season just passed tend to get very busy and then problems slack off in the spring and fall. At least that is what I've noticed. I'll let you figure out why. Anyway, for both continuity reasons (this job is not as simple as it may seem, it took me quite awhile to get the hang of it) and the possibility of having many big folds hit the hobby all at once, the USOS will continue to have a Co-Directorship.

The last major issue I want to bring up before I get to discussing current problems is accountability. In a sense, players are just as responsible for delays in games as GM's are. I'm going to keep hammering at this issue in hopes of changing player psychology a little bit. If a game is late, players are responsible for the action of the Orphan Service. I only receive 1/7 of the szines listed (56 in all) in the latest *Zine Register* (published by Simon Billenness, 61A Park Avenue, Albany, NY 12208 and supposedly available by subscription though Simon doesn't list a price...come on, Simon, how am I supposed to plug you when I don't know how much you cost...what is your price anyway?). I can't keep track of anything by myself.

The natural question is then, "how late is late?" My general answer would be that any unusual degree of tardyness or a general trend of slippage toward greater than one month turnaround should be reported. In general, the stated policy of the USOS has been that games are never moved (without the consent of the GM) unless three months have passed after a deadline without an adjudication. The first action of the USOS always is to gather facts and a game would never be moved until the GM has been contacted and has had a chance to get the game back on track. The process is much improved; however, when the initial contacts come before the situation has deteriorated to that extent. Even if a delay has been longer than the three month limit, I do *not* immediately declare all such games orphaned. It seems to take about a month to gather the necessary addresses and other information. That month also gives GM's a chance to continue the adjudication of the games on their own. A consideration must be to remember that this is a hobby and that no one wishes to shame someone into leaving the hobby completely because they allow the rest of their life to take precedence over hobby activities occasionally. At the same time, the players have a right to a punctually run game. I try to keep this balance in mind, but it isn't always easy. The task is much easier when I hear about problems before they become serious. There should not be a stigma attached to having the USOS checking in to see how things are going. I keep trying to push load-reduction (giving me some games to rehouse and keeping the rest) on GM's with time problems, but I haven't been very successful. I intend to keep trying. The most important thing to remember is that this is a hobby service and it should run the way all of you want it to be run. I don't feel that I get enough feedback on current activities, so I would like to encourage a "Letters to the Custodian" column. I'd like to hear *your* views.

Following up on that, Ron (California) Brown has been discussing the Orphan Service in recent issues of *Murd'ring Ministers* and I would like to make a few comments (see the next page and my report on the problems with 1983AY). Ron or any of the rest of you are free to reprint any of what I have to say in this or any other issue of YVSC. As I'm going to keep repeating, the more aware people are of what the USOS is and isn't doing the better.

*Issues Concerning***Murd'ring Ministers**

1983AY

*Fall 1907 was due (though the last season I've seen is Fall 1906)**Addresses of the Participants*

FRANCE: Jerry Lucas, 3902 Lakemead Way, Redwood City, CA 94062
 GERMANY: Jeff Albrecht, P.O. Box 295, Doland, SD 57436-0295
 ITALY: Steve Arnawoodian, 602 Hemlock Circle, Lansdale, PA 19446
 RUSSIA: Ron Brown, 70 F Chesterton Drive, Nepean, Ontario, CANADA K2E 5S9
 TURKEY: Ron Brown, 1528 El Sereno Pl., Bakersfield, CA 93304
 GM: Jim Burgess, 100 Holden Street, Providence, RI 02908, (401) 351-0287

ORDERS DUE TO ME ON FEBRUARY 20, 1986 (see below for season due)

I have a postcard from Ron (California) Brown, dated January 14, 1986, telling me that Mike planned to send out a final adjudication of the Fall 1907 season within a week and then turn the game over to me for rehousing. I have not seen that adjudication yet, though we may cross in the mail. That has been happening to me with disturbing frequency lately. An additional problem seems to be confusion about when the original deadline for Fall 1907 was. I still have not seen the adjudication of Spring 1907. Ron (Canada) Brown reported that Fall 1907 was due on November 9, 1985, but Jeff Albrecht says his copy of the October 7, 1985 adjudication of Spring 1907 (at least we all agree on when Spring 1907 was sent out) had no due date. He seems to imply that Mike does not have orders from him for Fall 1907. Is anyone still with me?!? In addition, everyone's favorite hamster molester, Woody, still has a fleet in Naples, although Mike placed him in CD after two straight NMR's. Clearly, this last fact is the most crucial part of the problem... Seriously though, I am in a bit of a quandry. If any game in the hobby's history has created more problems for more people, I'd be very surprised. That's saying quite a bit given this hobby's long and storied past. Is there any possibility that we can wrap this up in a reasonable and expeditious fashion? I'm going to have to throw some hypotheticals at you so listen carefully. If you receive an adjudication from Mike Coburn within a week of receiving this szine then that adjudication is valid. I would ask Mike not to confuse the issue. If he has not sent out an adjudication of Fall 1907 by the time he gets this szine, I hope that he will hold off and turn everything over to me immediately. I would like to have any orders he may have in hand and game statistics for the hobby records (I hope to see a well documented history of this game before it passes into oblivion, so a GM statement that will be held confidential until the end of the game also would be appreciated). My current intent is to hold on to the game and allow Ron to continue to publish the results in *Murd'ring Ministers*. Many people have been following the game there and should have the opportunity to see the end. Now there are two scenarios to recap:

1) If you have an adjudication for Fall 1907 from Mike Coburn then Winter only is due to me on February 20th. If I have Spring orders from everyone, I'll adjudicate that season as well (separation on a single request).

2) If you do not have an adjudication for Fall 1907 from Mike Coburn then I want Fall 1907 orders from everyone, along with a copy of the Spring 1907 adjudication from someone, by February 20th. I will use orders that Mike forwards to me if I don't hear from you, but I would prefer to have some feedback.

As far as I am concerned, I will accept orders from Woody for Italy, but otherwise Italy will remain in CD. I hope that covers everything. Oh yes, if anyone would like a GM other than me to finish the game they should let me know and I should be able to grant the request.

Now I want to discuss the comments on the USOS in *Murd'ring Ministers* #78. Ron quoted from a letter I wrote on August 26, 1985 to the players in 1984CH (a game Ron is GMing in *Murd'ring Ministers*). To recap, Ben Schilling requested that game be moved to another GM and did hint (as Ron noted) that he might ask that it be declared irregular if it were not moved. Ron was (and is?) upset that I brought up the irregularity issue, but as a USOS Co-Director and not being the BNC, I really had little choice. The players had a right to know what the

possible consequences of staying with Ron might be. I do not intend to discuss the irregularity issue per se, because this is the wrong soapbox to make public my views on the BNC's domain, but I would like to point out a very disturbing aspect of the concept of calling games irregular. Has a game ever been called irregular without an appeal to the BNC for the label to be applied? Does the BNC review every game finish to probe for possible grounds for irregularity? (obviously not) Irregardless of the validity of any objections about the conduct of 1984CH (or any other

game), the irregularity issue will only come up if someone prods the BNC about it. Obviously, the attachment of the label is and always has been inconsistent. I leave you to draw your own conclusions, but I wanted people to know what I meant by the statement, "The decision (made officially by Bill Quinn, the BNC) may or may not be affected by your decision on whether to move the game or not." Look at it from my position. It was and is not my job to use my position to tell the BNC what to do, but I was faced with a decision concerning a request to move a game. My decision was the decision that must be made in my position; I left it up to the players. I would have been remiss in failing to inform them of all relevant information I had that might affect their decision. Their decision was to remain with Ron and the fact that they made it makes it the right decision. I also want to thank Steve Langley for his kind comments in defending me; I hope I'm making clear my feeling that the games belong to the players. Note that Ben Schilling could not "make sure the BNC declared the game irregular", he could only make sure that the BNC considered the question.

I was pleased to read Conrad von Metzke's comments as well. I am always happy to read the advice of my predecessors in this position. If some of those predecessors or others would like to form an

independent commission where my decisions could be appealed, I would back the request wholeheartedly as long as I was allowed to appeal my own decisions there. Currently, when I encounter a tough problem I usually call Kathy Byrne or Dick Martin to ask for advice anyway. Even Orphan Games Honchos have limits to their Solomonic wisdom. I currently am employing vetoes on the destination for games and have conducted some votes on moving games (basically using Conrad's rule that the game would move only if no one voted against). I agree that it would be much easier if I saw more than a 1/7 of the hobby's szines and I'd listen to any proposal that would help me do that. The veto on game placements works and I believe will continue to work because people generally do not complain about the placement. Currently, I am getting an excellent supply of volunteers exceeding the need, but I'm always looking for more (I'm safe as long as Marc Peters, Melinda Holley, Conrad von Metzke, Paul Rauterberg, and Steve Hutton don't all go down at once...luckily, most szines run three games or less these days). My thanks go to Ron for bringing up some important issues regarding the conduct of my office and I hope that I've cleared up a few more misconceptions. As I said on the first page, I'll be more than pleased to run a letter column discussing anything concerning the Orphan Service.

Issues Concerning

The Concert of Europe

1984CA

Spring 1906 is due to Michael Lee on FEBRUARY 12, 1986

Addresses of the Participants

AUSTRIA: Al Villanueva, 1497 W. 5th, Eugene, OR 97402
 ENGLAND: Paul Gardner, Rt. 1, Box 2338, Newfane, VT 05345
 FRANCE: Andy Clough, 11033 Barman Ave., Culver City, CA 90230
 GERMANY: Joan Extrom, 35096 Kings Valley Highway, Philomath, OR 97370
 ITALY: Gary Coughlan, 4614 Martha Cole Lane, Memphis, TN 38118
 RUSSIA: Kevin Kozlowski, 2401 E. Northern Pkwy., Baltimore, MD 21214
 GM: Michael Lee, 3480 Danna Court, Eugene, OR 97405, (503) 485-3044

1984IN

Fall 1904 is due to Michael Lee on FEBRUARY 12, 1986

Addresses of the Participants

AUSTRIA: Bob O'Donnell, 905 North Ninth Lower, Klamath Falls, OR 97601
 ENGLAND: Ken Corbin, 35096 Kings Valley Highway, Philomath, OR 97370
 FRANCE: Marc Peters, 1814 Cameron Dr. #3, Madison, WI 53711
 GERMANY: John Caruso, 29-10 164th St., Flushing, NY 11358
 ITALY: Chris Daley, 2106 San Marcos, Claremont, CA 91711
 RUSSIA: Andy Clough, 11033 Barman Ave., Culver City, CA 90230
 TURKEY: Ed Henry, 31507 106th Pl. SE, #S207, Auburn, WA 98002
 GM: Michael Lee, 3480 Danna Court, Eugene, OR 97405, (503) 485-3044

1984CX

Fall 1905 is due to Mike Ehli on FEBRUARY 12, 1986

Addresses of the Participants

AUSTRIA: Lu Henry, 6056 Waverly, Dearborn Heights, MI 48127
 ENGLAND: Chris Lee, 8335 Fairmont Drive #4-208, Denver, CO 80231
 FRANCE: Kevin Kozlowski, 2401 E. Northern Pkwy., Baltimore, MD 21214
 GERMANY: Andy Clough, 11033 Barman Ave., Culver City, CA 90230
 ITALY: Barb Latteri, 2650 Coos Bay Blvd. #B-4, Coos Bay, OR 97420
 TURKEY: Bart Aikens, C129 Hillcrest, Iowa City, IA 52242
 GM: Mike Ehli, Carson Box 63184, University of Oregon, Eugene, OR 97403-6031, (503) 485-9649

As you can see, your decision has been to keep all of *The Concert of Europe's* games with *Club Voltaire* as a subzine in *Not New York*. I want to emphasize that it was your decision. Kevin Kozlowski says, for example, "I have no objection to whatever you decide." I would turn that around. I have no objection to what all of *you* decide. I wish you luck and speedy adjudications in your new home. Let me wrap up with a few comments:

1) Michael has promised that these games will run on a reasonable schedule from now on. It is up to you as players to decide what is reasonable, but you should know that Michael considers one month delays (e.g. your next adjudication should be in your hands before March 12, 1986) unreasonable from here on out. The responsibility for monitoring the situation is yours.

2) Some people thought that *Club Voltaire* was a fake. Let me assure you that it was *not* a fake. The February 12th deadline that Michael Lee set there must stand regardless, as many of you pointed out. I sent any orders I received from you to Michael.

3) *Club Voltaire* will be a subzine in *Not New York*. I have spoke with both Paul Gardner and Michael Lee about the idea and they feel that the joint responsibility will help both of them stay on schedule. Together they will stand stronger and all that.

4) Bart Aikens would like to keep *Screed* going. I believe that an agreement has been worked out so that *Screed* will now be a subzine in *Not New York* as well. I'm pleased to hear that as I found *Screed* to be enjoyable reading (what little I saw of it).

5) I have a few address updates, so I thought I would publish them for the players' information. If I had my way, GM's would put current player addresses on every adjudication. It would make my job so much easier! I admit, however, that only having the use of a word processor simplifies the task to manageable proportions.

6) I want to thank Michael for what is turning out to be a reasonably clean fold. I noted with pleasure the offer to transfer sub credit to *Not New York* or give refunds. Another traditional task of the USOS has been to attempt to procure refunds when szines fold. I'm glad that it appears as if my services will not be needed for that here. If anyone does have a problem, be sure and let me know and I'll try to help.

7) Let me reemphasize at the close of my remarks that there was a nearly universal skepticism from the players concerning Michael's ability to stick to deadlines. Michael is well aware that he will have to win back your trust slowly. I believe Paul Gardner also is aware that his timeliness has been slipping a bit of late. I am hopeful that this agreement works out, but I am also hopeful that the players won't let things slide out of hand again. Good luck to everyone.

Personal Note to You:

Dear Larry,
 Can we do all for all trading
 (not DW, just X)? Thanks.
 Take care,
 Jim